

VEBBE REBBE

Extended Purim Seuda

Question: My family likes to have the Purim seuda toward the end of the day, and then we eat well into the night. What are the halachic implications (if any)?

Ed. note: This Vebbe Rebbe Q&A applies outside Yerushalayim this year, but not to Jerusalem's Friday Purim. See separate piece on Friday Seuda, further on...

Answer: According to the normal rules, we would think that this is not an optimal practice. Presumably, every moment and element of festivity of Purim adds to the mitzva (Rama, Orach Chayim 695). We do not find a halacha of tosefet (adding on to the day before and/or after Purim). Therefore, it all should be during the day.

However, the Terumat HaDeshen (I:110) cites an early source and a broad minhag to start the meal late in the day and go into the night. His requirement that a (significant) part of the meal is during the day makes the matter more one of preferences than of basic fulfillment of the mitzva. After all, if one has a meal in honor of Purim, then even if the part that was eaten during the day was not elaborate, he still fulfills the mitzva, especially if part of the festive food is eaten during the day.

The way the Terumat HaDeshen paints the minhag, it developed based on trading off the preferences of one mitzva vs. another. The morning and

even part of the afternoon is full with Kri'at HaMegila, mishlo'ach manot, and matanot la'evyonim. The latter two are open-ended mitzvot which are strongly recommended to be done on a large scale (Shulchan Aruch, OC 695:4 regarding mishlo'ach manot; Rambam, Megilla 2:17 and Mishna Berura 294:3 regarding matanot la'evyonim). One should also daven Mincha before the big and sometimes incapacitating meal (see Shulchan Aruch, OC 232:2). Thus, allowing the meal to start later enables one not to rush the other mitzvot. One may also add that in order to enable the inclusion of others (which is desirable, family or not), including those coming from a distance, one must give time for them to finish their mitzvot and make it.

The Terumat HaDeshen describes the minhag as having the main part of the meal in the evening, although, he also writes that he personally had his in the morning. The way the Rama (OC 695:2) sets out the minhag in the manner he considers acceptable, people should not start the meal too close to the end of the day; the main part of the meal should be during the day. It seems logical that he does not care how long one continues after nightfall but whether there was enough time to have the majority of what would have been a proper meal (including merriment and songs and words of inspiration).



Is the festivity into the next night worth anything religiously? There are three ways to explain how it can be. The Terumat HaDeshen seems to say that the two time periods of the meal form one unit, and thus the day-rooted meal was lavish, which is what is important. The Meshech Chochma (see Mikra'ei Kodesh (Frank) 53)) says that in the time of the Purim story, the celebrations started in the day and continued into the night (as do the laws of korbanot - see Y'mei HaPurim, p. 157) so that the night is an appropriate time for festivities. The Levush (OC 695:2) says that both days of Purim (14 & 15 Adar) are days of festivity, so that the night is appropriate as the second day of Purim. According to the Levush, this minhag should logically not be as desirable in Yerushalayim, where the evening after the seuda is the 16th. That being said, the minhag, at least for Ashkenazim (see Mikra'ei Kodesh (Harari), 13:5), is to allow extending the meal into the night - even in Yerushalayim.

In theory, there could be a practical consequence of this minhag. The Rosh (see Tur, OC 695) says that Al HaNisim can be said only if Birkat HaMazon is recited during the day. He says the same thing regarding R'tzei at Seuda Shlishit (Shut 22:6). On the other hand, the Beit Yosef cites a Hagahot Maimoniot that Al HaNisim can be said at night if the meal started during the day, as we do in practice regarding Seuda Shlishit (Shulchan Aruch, OC 188:2). While the Shulchan

Aruch elsewhere (OC 695:3) cites two opinions on the matter, his conclusion and that of the Rama is that Al HaNisim is to be recited in this case.

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